

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT

Please amend the abstract as follows:

[PROBLEMS] To provide an An image compression apparatus and method capable of performing compression with different image qualities within an image. [MEANS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS] In a mosaic processing unit (16) of the image compression apparatus, area division means a filtering region divider (130) divides input image data into a plurality of filtering areas and at least some of the filtering areas are subjected to unification processing for each of the filtering areas by a filtering unit (131). On the other hand, a JPEG encoder (17) divides the image data after the mosaic processing into a plenty plurality of rectangular block areas and each of the block areas is subjected to ~~the~~ DCT processing and quantization processing. Here, the filtering area consists of adjacent one or more ~~than one~~ sets of rectangular areas each consisting of two or more pixels obtained by equally dividing the aforementioned block area by $2n$ (n is a natural number).